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JCSM-166-61

15 MAR 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Evaluation of the Military Aspects of Alternate Concepts, CIA Para-Military Plan, Cuba (S)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have evaluated the military aspects of three alternate concepts for the CIA Para-Military plan for action to effect the overthrow of the Castro Government. The military evaluation of the basic plan was forwarded to you by JCSM-57-61, subject: "Military Evaluation of the CIA Para-Military Plan, Cuba", dated 3 February 1961, and the evaluation of the proposed supplementary phase to the basic plan was forwarded to you by JCSM-149-61, subject: "Evaluation of Proposed Supplementary Phase, CIA Para-Military Plan, Cuba", dated 10 March 1961.

2. The following CIA alternate concepts of operations were evaluated:

a. Alternative I - Original para-military plan, except main landings at night, without benefit of airborne landing or air strikes. See Appendix A hereto for details and evaluation.

b. Alternative II - At an objective area on NE coast, employment of airborne company at evening nautical twilight to seize key terrain features astride two separate roads leading into objective area to isolate same; this followed by night debarkation of remainder of Task Force; shipping then departs area prior to daylight; aircraft initiate air operations from airstrip within objective area following day. See Appendix B hereto for details and evaluation.

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c. Alternative III - At an objective area on the southern coast, amphibious landing of two infantry companies after dark to seize key areas; during the night, land remainder of Task Force; shipping then departs area prior to daylight; aircraft initiate air operations from the airstrips the following day. See Appendix C hereto for details and evaluation.

3. The conclusions of the evaluation of the military aspects of the three alternative concepts are as follows:

a. Alternative I - Without the psychological impact of the original concept, together with the difficulties of landing at night in this area and the lack of ability to initiate air operations, the ultimate success of Alternative I is doubtful.

b. Alternative II - Even though the Cuban Volunteer Force could be landed and sustained for a minimum of 3 days, the distance from the seat of government, together with the problem of continuous resupply over long distances, causes this course of action to be least likely to accomplish the objective.

c. Alternative III has all the prerequisites necessary to successfully establish the Cuban Voluntary Task Force, including air elements, in the objective area and sustain itself with outside logistic support for several weeks; however, inaccessibility of the area may limit the support anticipated from the Cuban populace.

d. Of the alternative concepts, Alternative III is considered the most feasible and the most likely to accomplish the objective.

e. None of the alternative concepts are considered as feasible and likely to accomplish the objective as the basic para-military plan.

4. It is recommended that:

a. The Secretary of Defense support the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as expressed in the above conclusions.

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b. The views expressed in the above conclusions be transmitted to the Director of Central Intelligence, together with three copies of the Appendices hereto, for his information and consideration.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

SIGNED

L. L. LEMNITZER,
Chairman,
Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Attachment (10 pages)
7 copies of Appendices

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